

EXHIBIT 27
DATE 1/12/2011
HB 198

Dear Representative Kary:

I am writing to ask you to oppose HB 198 sponsored by Representative Ken Peterson. This bill will hand over to corporations the power to condemn land for private merchant/export transmission ventures, including those merchant/export ventures by out-of-state corporations (e.g., NorthWestern, TransCanada) that provide not one spark of energy to Montanans and indeed cause actual harm to Montanans by raising power rates.

The bill is in response to the recent ruling in Montana Ninth District Court that the Montana Alberta Tie Line (MATL) does not possess the power of eminent domain. Judge McKinnon, in the courageous December 12, 2010 ruling, stood up for the fundamental constitutional rights of Montanans, and now out-of-state corporations have decided that that needs fixing. It doesn't.

It is important to remember that merchant/export lines like Mountain States Transmission Intertie (MSTI) will raise Montanans' utility rates by exporting Montana's legacy coal and hydro generation (not just new wind as the hype suggests) to the much more expensive California market. We'll buy it back at California prices. There is no in-state "public use" for this kind of transmission line because there are no off-ramps in Montana. Granting eminent domain powers for them is like condemning land for a shopping mall or office park rather than for a highway. A jobs argument is made by lobbyists, but the Draft Environmental Impact Statement of MSTI makes it clear that new permanent in-state jobs from MSTI will be "insignificant."

The aggressive, even overwhelming, corporate lobbying associated with "wind" and "transmission" in Montana is eerily like that which preceded utility deregulation. I fear that legislators may similarly look back with regret on the forces released by HB 198.

Higher rates kill jobs and hurt the constituents in your district and throughout Montana. Please vote NO on HB 198.

Sincerely,

Donald L. Kronenberger

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